



## RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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14 December 2009

### RUS103314.E

Russia: Whether hospitals are obliged to notify police if someone is treated as the result of an assault, including cases of domestic violence

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

Information about hospital obligations and procedures for handling assault injuries in Russia was scarce among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

Several sources indicate that hospitals in Russia are obliged to notify police in cases where a person is treated as the result of an assault (Canada 24 Nov. 2009; Russia 10 Nov. 2009; CAC 17 Nov. 2009; Post Doctoral Researcher 17 Nov. 2009; Associate Professor 19 Nov. 2009). In a telephone interview with the Research Directorate on 10 November 2009, the Head of the Political Section of the Russian Embassy in Ottawa stated that hospitals in Russia are required to contact police in cases of bullet wounds, knife wounds and other injuries that clearly indicate assault. He also reported that when a patient states that an injury was intentionally inflicted by another person, the medical staff should report it to the police (Russia 10 Nov. 2009). In correspondence with the Research Directorate on 24 November 2009, an official at the Canadian Embassy in Moscow similarly stated that hospitals in Russia are required to notify police in all cases of "criminal injury," defined as an injury resulting from "his [or her] own or [a] third party's unlawful actions" (Canada 24 Nov. 2009).

In a telephone interview with the Research Directorate on 17 November 2009, a Post Doctoral Researcher in the Political Science Department of the University of Tromsø, Norway, who has conducted field research about crisis centres in northwest Russia, stated that hospitals in Russia are obliged to report cases of assault to the police, but that in practice, many cases of domestic violence are not reported. According to the Head of the Political Section of the Russian Embassy in Ottawa, whether hospitals report cases of domestic violence to the police would depend on the victim's statement and the injury (Russia 10 Nov. 2009). In 19 November 2009 correspondence with the Research Directorate, an Associate Professor of Political Science and Women's Studies at Brooklyn College, City University of New York (CUNY), with extensive fieldwork in Russia on gender violence, stated:

[t]he crucial issue for domestic violence victims is whether the hospital would understand the injuries as an assault rather than as a 'family scandal.' It is more typical for doctors and nurses to downplay the violence, to assume that it only constitutes 'minor assault' which does not require police attention.

In 20 November 2009 correspondence with the Research Directorate, the Director of ANNA--National Center for the Prevention of Violence, a non-profit, non-governmental organization (NGO) which provides counselling, legal assistance and other services to victims of domestic violence (n.d.), indicated that hospitals in Russia are obliged to notify the police only in cases of assault with severe injuries, such as gunshot wounds and knife wounds. According to the Director, these rules apply to both domestic violence cases and other cases (ANNA Center 20 Nov. 2009).

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

### References

ANNA--National Center for the Prevention of Violence. 20 November 2009. Correspondence from the Director.

\_\_\_\_\_. N.d. "Our Programs." <[http://www.owl.ru/anna/program\\_eng.htm](http://www.owl.ru/anna/program_eng.htm)> [Accessed 2 Nov. 2009]

Associate Professor of Political Science and Women's Studies, Brooklyn College, City University of New York (CUNY). 19 November 2009. Correspondence.

Canada. 24 November 2009. Embassy of Canada, Moscow. Correspondence from a Migration Integrity Officer.

Civic Assistance Committee (CAC) [Moscow]. 17 November 2009. Correspondence from the Chair.

Post Doctoral Researcher of Political Science, University of Tromsø, Norway. 17 November 2009. Telephone interview.

Russia. 10 November 2009. Embassy of Russia, Ottawa. Telephone interview with the Head of the Political Section.

#### Additional Sources Consulted

**Oral sources:** Attempts to reach representatives of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Centre for Ethnopolitical and Regional Studies, the Ekaterina Women's Crisis Center, Yekaterinburg, the Psychological Crisis Center for Women, St. Petersburg, and the Medical Centre for Information and Analysis (MCIA) of the Russian Academy of Medical Sciences were unsuccessful within the time constraints of this Response.

**Internet sites, including:** Amnesty International (AI), European Country of Origin Network (ecoi.net), Factiva, Human Rights Watch (HRW), International Crisis Group, Office of the United Nations (UN) High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Refworld, Memorial, U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI).

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